

PD-ABU -383

111923

~~ISA 110967~~

~~P958~~

END OF TOUR REPORT

STEVEN E. WEERTS

FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTOR-PESHAWAR-NOV. 1, 1990-JUNE 9, 1991

ACTING CHIEF-OF-PARTY JUNE 9, 1991-JANUARY 9, 1992

NARCOTICS AWARENESS AND CONTROL PROJECT

CONTRACT NO. 306-0210-C-00-0820-05

## INTRODUCTION

I arrived in Pakistan on October 1, 1990. My job title was Field Operations Director for the Poppy Reduction and Elimination Unit (PREU). Upon arrival I learned that congressional approval had not been given for the PREU. However, it was always expected that a positive response would be received any day. From October of 1990 until the summer of 1991, NACP was always waiting (just a little longer) for the PREU to get approval.

While waiting for permission to work, the PREU did everything possible to prepare for the day that our work could begin in earnest. Even though PREU could not spend money or hire personnel, the preliminary work centered on learning the details of political happenings in Afghanistan, doing profiles of various possible work locations inside Afghanistan, developing methods for choosing possible poppy elimination sites, preparing for personnel hiring, preparing for procurement of fertilizer, seed, tractors, other farm equipment, and irrigation and construction supplies. In addition, we took a close look at Sections 487 and 483 of the U.S. Code which is concerned with the limitations on working with people involved in drug trafficking. We also started work on a comprehensive study of poppies in Afghanistan along with studying comparative crops. PREU always hoped to make a quick transition from preparation into the actual poppy elimination work.

Of course, in the end, the poppy elimination work was purged from the project but I continued to work for NACP after the original Chief-of-Party, Gerry Owens, resigned from his position. My job as Acting Chief-of-Party began on June 9, 1991 and I continued this job until the end of my assignment on January 9, 1992. My job as Acting Chief-of-Party was a real challenge because NACP personnel had been working for an unusual length of time without any idea what would happen to the project. My time was spent building up the morale of a demoralized staff, implementing some new administrative procedures, re-focusing the design of the project, moving the project to Islamabad, and finally, closing the project.

This "End Of Tour Report" will be narrowly focused on my personal work while at NACP. The "End Of Contract Report" will summarize the occurrences that took place on the project as a whole.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The potential for NACP to do a lot of beneficial work, was obvious. However, in the end, the potential was largely unfulfilled. Inroads were made in many areas, but political realities hindered potential goals from being reached. A review of my work on the project is as follows:

### A. POLITICS AND LANGUAGE

My first task was to review and update my knowledge of Afghan politics and the Dari language. I learned as much as possible on the politics of Afghanistan, the resistance movement, and the Afghan refugees inside Pakistan. I reviewed Dari by taking an advanced language course through IRC. I found these skills to be extremely valuable when doing the core activities that were required by NACP.

### B. THE GOSHTA-KAMA PLAN

Prior to my arrival in Pakistan, AID/REP had some contact and completed some work in the Goshta-Kama area of Nangarhar Province in Afghanistan. The people of the area had already received some assistance from the U.S. government and the plan was to give them additional assistance for their work in stopping poppy production. The Information and Research Unit, along with PREU, started a survey of the Goshta-Kama area. PREU designed a plan to distribute fifty tons of wheat seed, fifty tons of DAP fertilizer, and one-hundred tons of urea fertilizer as part of an area poppy ban. A detailed schedule was made and transportation was planned so delivery could begin on November 13, 1990.

Another product of planning for Goshta-Kama, was the drafting of forms for possible poppy elimination plans. An application for a poppy elimination plan was drafted to enable PREU to collect basic information on an area so further research for the site selection process could be accomplished. A related document was also drafted that notified anyone who was interested in a poppy elimination plan that no commitment of any kind was promised just because someone filled out an application form.

Even though the Goshta-Kama plan was not implemented, for various reasons, it was excellent training for possible future

poppy elimination activities.

In concert with the above work, we began to ask which people in the Goshta-Kama area we could work with, considering the requirements of U. S. law that forbade any dealings with drug traffickers.

### C. THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT

In preparation for the various poppy elimination agreements with people in Afghanistan, I researched the Foreign Assistance Act and how it applied to the PREU. The following is an outline of my research and thoughts on this subject.

Since the inception of the Narcotics Awareness and Control Project there has been a controversy over the methods of compliance with 22 U.S.C. Sections 2291(b) [Pub. L. 87-195, Pt. I, Section 483, as added Pub. L. 99-83, Title VI, Section 609, Aug. 8, 1985, 99 Stat. 230] and 2291(f) [Pub. L. 87-195, Pt. I, Section 487, as added Pub. L. 100-690, Title IV, Section 4503, Nov. 18, 1988, 102 Stat. 4285] of the Foreign Assistance Act. These sections are quoted in full below:

#### **22 U.S.C. Section 2291b. Prohibition on use of foreign assistance for reimbursements for drug crop eradications**

Funds made available to carry out this chapter may not be used to reimburse persons whose illicit drug crops are eradicated.

#### **22 U.S.C. Section 2291f. Prohibition on assistance to drug traffickers**

##### **(a) Prohibition**

The President shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that assistance under this chapter and the Arms Export Control Act [22 U.S.C. Section 2751 et seq.] is not provided to or through any individual or entity that the President knows or has reason to believe-

(1) has been convicted of a violation of, or a conspiracy to violate, any law or regulation of the United States, a State or the District of Columbia, or a foreign country relating narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances (as defined in section

2291(i)(3) of this title); or

(2) is or has been an illicit trafficker in any such controlled substance or is or has been a knowing assistant, abettor conspirator, or colluder with others in the illicit trafficking in any such substance.

**(b) Regulations**

The President shall issue regulations specifying the steps to be taken in carrying out this section.

**(c) Congressional review of regulations**

Regulations issued pursuant to subsection (b) of this section shall be submitted to the Congress before they take effect.

I believe Section 2291(b) shouldn't have created a problem for NACP unless it was interpreted in a very twisted way. It was not the goal nor the intent of NACP to pay producers for eradicating their poppy crops. Rather, NACP could have made agreements whereby area leaders would not grow poppy and NACP could have done certain development work in the target area. It was clear that there could never be a payoff to people for not growing drug crops.

Conversely, Section 2291(f) raised many questions of interpretation. The gist of 2291(f) was that no assistance should be given to people involved in trafficking drugs. But what burden of proof was required of groups working in anti-drug programs like NACP? Who was responsible for the ultimate decisions?

Surely, it was not the desire of Congress in passing Section 2291(f), to ban all anti-narcotics programs. Anti-drug programs (except for prevention programs) would always be conducted in drug-growing or drug-using communities or there would be no point to the programs. We would be preaching to the already converted. No one wanted drug traffickers to profit from anti-drug projects, but NACP had to find a realistic approach which allowed the project to combat the production and use of narcotics.

Section 2291(f) begins by stating that the President shall take all "reasonable" steps to ensure that assistance is not provided to the wrong people. "Reasonable" steps should not mean that every decision concerning a site selection should be micro-managed from AID Washington. The Embassy Narcotics Committee in Islamabad is more than qualified to make decisions about exclusion of people under Section 2291(f). The Embassy Committee could make quick, well-informed decisions, while going through AID Washington would take an excessive amount of time.

Another major question concerns the burden of proof in deciding whether someone is "connected" with drug trafficking. First of all, there should not be a requirement for anyone to prove themselves innocent. Not only is this an impossible burden of proof but it goes against the basic ideals found in the United States Constitution. Likewise, if there is no information that can be discovered about a person, he should remain eligible for program participation. The lack of information cannot be used as any type of proof of guilt.

It is only by proof beyond a reasonable doubt that citizens in U.S. Courts can be convicted of a criminal offense. Even though, disallowing a person's participation in a program like NACP is not a criminal conviction, it is a very serious allegation that should not be made without proper proof. Do we want to place foreign citizens on a different standard of judgement than American citizens? At the very least, clear and convincing evidence that someone is involved in drug trafficking should be required before they are disallowed from program participation.

These procedural questions, as to compliance with Section 2291(f), should be answered by the regulations that are required by sub-section b of 2291(f). These regulations should list specific steps in carrying out this federal law. Until those regulations are completed, the following specific recommendations could have been used:

1. NACP, through AID cooperation, could have narrowed down a list of possible sites for Poppy Elimination Plans (PEPs). Letters of inquiry could have been sent to a list of reliable people approved by AID and the Embassy Narcotics Committee. These reliable people would have to be people trusted by the Committee and they must be very knowledgeable about the politics and events inside Afghanistan.

2. The responses from these reliable people must state conclusions that are supported by evidence.

People assessing compliance with the Foreign Assistance Act must have some incentive to act in an efficient manner because of the time limitations on projects.

3. When the responses were completed they would be collected and sent to the Embassy Narcotics Committee in Islamabad for review. This Committee would then have the power to decide whether people are qualified to participate in Poppy Elimination Plans. The Committee's decision would be conveyed to NACP in all due haste.

4. This entire process should be completed within two to three months in order to be practical. If a step was added requiring approval from AID Washington, the time restraints would become unworkable.

Through this proposed method of compliance with the Foreign Assistance Act, NACP would have an important and active role. However, the ultimate decision would rest with the Embassy Narcotics Committee in Islamabad, firmly in the control of the United States Government. This method offers an efficient, yet complete method of adhering to this act of Congress.

I present the above thoughts on compliance with the U.S. Code because this, reportedly, was one of the major stumbling blocks with this project. After our experience, it appears that any future U.S. government drug projects need to have clear instructions on how to comply with the Foreign Assistance Act or they will be doomed to the same problems that NACP experienced. Hopefully, the above suggested guidelines could be constructively used to avoid future difficulties.

#### C. CRITERIA SELECTION TOOLS

Preparing for the selection of target areas for the poppy elimination plans also commanded a large portion of my time. Through work with Brad Miller, Field Operations Director in Quetta, and former Chief-of-Party Gerry Owens, we developed a criteria tool to objectively select areas that would have the best chances for successfully banning poppy production and completing developmental work. From the very beginning of the project various Afghan groups approached NACP proposing plans for poppy elimination in many areas of Afghanistan from Helmand to Badakshan.

A three stage selection process was chosen by NACP. The first two stages rated the proposed target areas on a scale of one to five in various categories resulting in an ordinal ranking. A negative result in certain categories such as leadership integrity and "487" concerns would result in automatic disqualification.

The first stage weeded out the unqualified proposals and provided a list of the remaining areas where sites could be selected. The second stage depended on the results of on-site surveys that were done by the Information and Research Unit. Again, rankings would be made to sort out the proposed sites.

The third stage was designed to actually select the target areas. Although facilitated by steps one and two, the final decision was designed to be a judgement call by NACP and USAID.

The criteria scales were divided as follows:

POLITICAL

Internal Conflict  
Leadership Integrity  
Presence of Shura  
Centralization  
Leadership Authority  
External Conflict

LOGISTICAL

Travel Time  
Seasonal Accessibility  
Commercial Transport Costs  
Alternate Routes  
Transit Security

DEMOGRAPHIC

Number of Tribes  
Area Population  
Population Concentration

POPPY CULTURE

Intensity  
History  
Returns  
Trader Influence  
Leadership Involvement in Trafficking  
% of Local Economy

OTHER DEVELOPMENT FACTORS

Other Assistance: Agencies in the Area  
Severity of Needs  
Promising Activities  
Range of Needs

The criteria were defined and weighted according to their importance. Of the 24 criteria, 5 were considered critical and therefore, a score of 0 in any critical area resulted in an area being rejected for project activities. After the critical criteria were determined, all 24 criteria were ranked according to rating, weight, score, information confidence, and unknowns.

According to this method, the Poppy Reduction and Elimination



Unit devised an objective tool to determine what areas would have made the best sites for poppy elimination. This tool could also be of significant value for other projects doing "crop substitution".

#### D. PROCUREMENT PLANS

Another area that I worked on was procurement plans for the poppy elimination areas for PREU. Plans were made for varied numbers and sizes of poppy elimination sites. A package of goods was designed to be given to people at sites over a two year period. The package included wheat seed, DAP fertilizer, urea fertilizer, tractors, wheat threshers, assorted farm implements, irrigation equipment, and assorted construction tools and supplies. Plans were made to time the inputs gradually so there would be plenty of incentive to continue the poppy ban. Research was also done on where the commodities could be obtained locally or from the United States.

Again, this work was done in anticipation of approval of the PREU that never, in the end, came about.

#### E. PERSONNEL

Personnel for the PREU in Peshawar were identified and interviewed in advance, again, anticipating an implementation plan. First, required positions were identified. Numerous job applications were received and some applicants were interviewed. A core staff could have been in place, within days, if PREU had received approval. The preliminary work of PREU was assisted greatly by the loan of three men from Volunteers In Technical Assistance. (VITA) These men were all Afghans with experience in cross-border work. Their knowledge of Afghan agriculture was a great help in planning future activities for PREU.

#### F. POPPIES IN AFGHANISTAN STUDY

In 1972, former Chief-of-Party, Gerry Owens, completed a study titled "Poppies In Afghanistan." Dr. Owens studied in detail, a few locations where poppies were grown and was able to witness the methods of production. NACP decided to do an update of that study including information from many more areas than the original study.

A major consideration in doing the update, was getting up to date knowledge about the prices and marketing system for opium. Likewise, some of the farming practices reportedly had changed since 1972, such as the use of fertilizer and improved seed varieties, resulting in higher poppy yields.

I worked with the employees on loan from VITA to design the questionnaire for the poppy study as well as the questionnaires on other major crops. We made great effort to insure that accurate, impartial, information gathering methods were used.

The information collected about poppies came from farmers living inside Afghanistan and farmers living in refugee camps who regularly commuted to Afghanistan to farm their land. Information was collected on the following general categories:

- Cultural Practices
- Agricultural Problems
- Ownership of Land and Livestock
- Costs of Production Including Labor Costs
- Poppy Yields
- Poppy Prices
- Processing and Marketing
- Area Needs and Problems

These same general categories were used to design survey tools for other major crops such as wheat, corn, rice, sugar cane, cotton, and cumin, to compare the profit from poppy with the other major crops. A preliminary draft of this study along with charts and graphs has been completed.

#### ACTING CHIEF-OF-PARTY

On June 9, 1991 I was appointed as Acting Chief-of-Party after the resignation of Gerry Owens. A good share of my time was spent with the everyday administrative and personnel duties that the Chief-of-Party must perform. Although these duties are extremely important on a day to day basis, they are of little value for a report of this nature.

Another large portion of my time was spent trying to save the program as a whole. The number of new designs, scenarios, new ideas, rumors, and false starts were too numerous to be believed. After PREU was eliminated from the project, the re-focused project design combined the ongoing NAC awareness (educational) work with

a greatly expanded Information and Research Unit. The Information Unit's research plan included the following topics:

- Area Profiles
- Awareness Baseline Studies
- Remote Sensing of Poppy Production
- Agricultural Production Studies
- Marketing Studies
- Socio-Cultural Studies
- Micro-Enterprise Development
- Comparative Approaches to Narcotics Supply and Demand Reduction
- Awareness Impact Assessment Study
- Narcotics Prevalence Study
- Crop Systems Simulation

Our plan was to conduct necessary research to prepare a solid foundation for an Afghanistan-based anti-narcotics program that could be implemented with a future government of Afghanistan. Unfortunately, when NACP did not receive approval from Congress, all of this planning and preparation was wasted.

#### PROJECT CLOSE DOWN

Another major effort was closing the project in an orderly manner. When word was received that the NACP project was terminated, little time or money remained to complete the job. The following close down activities were completed for NACP offices in Quetta, Peshawar, and Islamabad.

- Inventory All Offices And Houses
- Send All Property To Ronco for Storage
- Obtain Receipts For All Property
- End All NACP Leases
- Terminate Staff By Giving Official Notice
- Pay Staff Severance Pay And Unused Annual Leave

In addition, library materials had to be inventoried and sent to AID/REP, remaining awareness materials had to be distributed, project materials had to be sorted and filed, and all project records had to be organized, boxed, and labeled for shipment to DAI in Bethesda, Maryland. Final reports were completed and arrangements were made to transport project expatriates and their belongings to the United States.

The entire close down process was a very sad one, after a year of waiting, and also considering the suffering that would follow for the unemployed Afghan refugees who worked on the project.

## PROBLEMS

There are always problems in any development project but the political problems with NACP totally overshadowed any other problems that existed. Lack of authorization for the Poppy Reduction and Elimination Unit (PREU) and the uncertainty for the remainder of the project's work made it impossible to clearly focus on our work. Not only was there indecision on the part of the United States Congress but also on the part of USAID/ Washington. Compounding the uncertainty was the lack of communication on the part of Congress and AID. Still to this day, there has not been a clear explanation of the problems surrounding the two Congressional Notifications which NACP submitted for approval. Without the political will, project implementation was next to impossible.

In spite of all these problems, poppy production, by many accounts, gets more serious with time. There are no indications that the problem will improve. The opportunity for meaningful work by NACP has been lost.

The reaction to drug use and production by the future government of Afghanistan still looms as an important consideration. Therefore, instead of trying to find resolutions to the unsolved problems of NACP I would like to suggest a few considerations for U.S. government involvement with the future Afghan government.

If there is a USAID program in Afghanistan when a new government takes power, the U.S. President will have to certify Afghanistan in regard to the drug question before aid is given. This will probably entail some type of agreement for anti-drug activities by the United States. It would be a distinct advantage to have an organizational plan ready before this situation arises, since the same problems will arise there with the Foreign Assistance Act.

First and foremost, the regulations regarding the implementation of the Foreign Assistance Act must be clarified. Then the following criteria must be considered when developing the plan:

## Organization Of A New Afghan Government

- Planning
- Finances
- Expert Advice
- Information and Research
- The Judicial System
- Police Enforcement
- Economic Incentives
- Eradication

Without planning for the future, the political will behind any upcoming project could be as fractured as it was with the NACP project. This type of re-occurrence should not be condoned. The problems are too serious and the resources too meager to conduct development work without the backing of political powers.